

**Title of Session:** Dealing with Rejection and Bad Reviews

**Creator:** Janet Beasley

**Curriculum:** NOVICE and ADVANCED

**Definition:** Rejection – denial, refusal, thrown out

**Goals:** By the end of the session enthusiasts will be able to identify with constructive criticism, and understand how to mentally and physically handle a rejection letter or bad review

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**Tools:**

**Ice Breaker Items:**

*Bring as many of the following items to the session that you wish, or make up your own list of items. The idea is to have an array of both useful and non-useful items:*

Marker

Stickers

Glitter

Faux Jewels

Couple of colorful toys from a local dollar store

Jar of baby food

Couple cans of vegetables

Couple cans of fruit

Old keys

A calculator

Old flip phone

Used fast food wrapper or carton

Empty used fast food drink cup

Scrap paper that has been wadded up to be thrown away

A jar of dirt

A small trinket box

Well used makeup (eye shadow, lip gloss, etc. – things that look yucky)

Dirty silverware

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Wipe off board or flip chart and appropriate markers

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**Ice Breaker:**

- Put the Ice Breaker items listed above on the table.
- Ask enthusiasts to separate the items into three piles: cool, not so cool, totally don't want anything to do with it.
- When the enthusiasts have the items divided into the three piles ask them why they put the items where they did.

- Then discuss why some of them thought some items were good and others thought the same items were yucky.

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**Activity:**

**A note from the creator of this session, author Janet Beasley:**

*Dreams are not for the fainthearted.* ~Janet Beasley~ This is a quote I personally have lived by for many, long, years. I have had opportunity after opportunity to throw in the towel, quit, give up, lose my self confidence, and see myself as a failure...but succumbing to those choices is the easy route. Through it all I have become a fighter, I am not a quitter. I am going after my dreams in the literary arena with a vengeance, and a passion that rivals the best of them. Reality is, I may never see all of my literary dreams come to pass. But I would rather leave this world trying, and doing my personal best, then go out while lying around wallowing in self pity – misery – doom - gloom, and seeing myself as a failure. I look in the mirror every day and see myself not only as a successful author (and probably not in the ways you are thinking), but also as a mentor to many aspiring writers.

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- When it comes to our literary masterpieces and making submissions and receiving bad reviews, we can all learn from both good and bad.
  - What one of us perceives as useless, another may find useful and vice versa.
  - It boils down to how the “good and bad,” regarding our manuscripts/stories/prose, is delivered to us as well as how we perceive the same that makes us feel either rejected or accepted. It can even lead us to wanting to better ourselves as writers.
  - Being rejected and receiving bad reviews in the literary industry is a common, every day occurrence. If you are going to be an author you might as well get used to it.
  - There is a 99% chance that your work is going to be rejected (if you are making submissions for publication), and receive bad reviews at one time or another during your journey as an author.
  - How you deal with the rejection(s) and bad reviews is one key to becoming a better writer.
  - First and foremost you must believe in yourself and your story. If you don't believe in **you** as an author and/or that **your** story is worth telling you will quickly become overwhelmed by those who think the opposite.

- If you believe in yourself and your story, you will be able to brush off rejections and bad reviews, open to continuing your career as an author, and will make adjustments where needed. All of these traits will help you tremendously as an author.
- When your book is released your **supportive** friends and family are going to lead you to think you are the greatest thing the literary world has ever encountered since Shakespeare! Granted, it is a wonderful feeling to receive such kudos from those you know, trust, and love. **But** it may not be what the rest of the world sees.
  - This does not mean that your loved ones are lying to you, it means they've most likely been by your side nearly every step of the way while you were writing. They spent a lot of their time encouraging, uplifting, and cheering you on. They witnessed your passion for the craft first hand, and have watched you go through those sleepless nights, writer's block, self-editing, and the rewriting of a chapter numerous times to make certain every word holds meaning. These people are as "close" to your story as you are. They know you, they can hear your "voice" coming through, they want you to succeed, and most likely you have been an inspiration to them by reaching the goal of being an author with a completed story. How could they see any bad in what you have done? They most likely can't due to the fact they are on "cloud nine" right with you.
- Below are some questions that can arise in your mind as an author:  
*Write the following 5 questions on your wipe off board or flip chart. After asking each question let the enthusiasts respond before you present the information beneath each question. They may even have additional answers that will enhance the session.*
  - **What happens when you submit your manuscript and you get rejected by publisher after publisher?**
    - Remain open while reading the rejection letters. Is there anything constructive you can take away from the rejection letter? Are there similarities you can learn from to be able to go back and make your story better?
    - Keep the letters – someday you will find it very helpful to see where you've come from and where you are then in your writing career.
    - The rejection may not be due to your skills, creativity, or number of words, it may simply mean that the publisher does not have need of your style story at this time.
      - Note from Janet: I received a rejection letter from a major publisher who told me not to quit writing. They encouraged me to submit my manuscript to other publishers as they did not have need of such at the time. They even left me an "open" invitation to submit with them in the future.

- Another rejection letter was cold and harsh saying nothing more than the fact that they did not want my story because they just couldn't get into it.
  - J.K. Rowling's journey to publication is very inspiring regarding this subject.
- **What do you do when the time comes that the “real world” has read your book and you received 1, 2, and 3 star reviews among those cherished 4 and 5 star reviews?**
  - Just like rejection letters, read them with an open mind. If there is anything you can take away from the review to better yourself as a writer, or your writing use it. If it is merely “trashing” your work and there is nothing constructive about it, MOVE ON!
  - Bad reviews are abundant, and for reasons you most likely won't even believe. There are other authors who don't like to see other authors succeed, therefore they will sometimes create fictitious names just to leave bad reviews and dish out 1 stars simply for the fact you are succeeding and they are not...jealousy.
  - For the most part you will become “immune” to reading your reviews on certain sites as you'll begin to see them as book “opinions” rather than truly constructive book “reviews.”
    - Note from Janet: I have received reviews from 1-5 stars. The one star still makes me laugh to this day. (Keep in mind my first novel was one book that held the entire trilogy of Maycly, it was 744 pages). *The reviewer stated that the book was not for them, but they had read the whole thing.* Now I don't know about you, but if a book is not for me I'm not going to waste my time reading 744 pages of it. So you can obviously see there is nothing constructive in that, so I laughed it off and kept going.
    - Note from Janet: On the flip side I received some amazing 5 star reviews that have humbled me beyond belief. (See Janet's Reviews HANDOUT)
- **What happens when a close friend or relative who has not been with you every step of the way discovers you are an author, buys your book, then gives it a lousy opinion (not review) with only 1,2, or 3 stars?**
  - Ask yourself if the review is constructive, or is it just an opinion? If it's just an opinion, let it go...water off a duck's back! You have better things to do than worry about reviews (or opinions) that are slanderous rather than constructive.
- **How do you handle a really good review yet the person only rated your story with 3 stars or less?**
  - Who knows? And who cares? And for the most part the literary world has become familiar with reviewers who understand that giving fewer stars helps drag your book down regardless of how good their review is. Perhaps the reviewer is writing in your genre

and they don't want anyone getting ahead of them. They may have thought your story was well written, but that's not their favorite genre...I know, then why did they read it? There are hundreds of reasons for such actions. Again, continue believing in yourself and your story.

- **How do you handle it if your friends and/or family make light of your newly chosen passion, and don't take you seriously?**
  - This is a tough one. When those you hang with are the most critical and demeaning it can become a damper on your creativity. It can lead you to think that writing really is a silly career, you're not worth the words you've written, or that no one is ever going to read your story anyway so you finally quit. This is the worst thing that can happen to a creative genius. Our advice is to remove yourself from the setting while you're writing. You could go to your library or local coffee shoppe and find a nice little nook where you can get lost in your story. Go to the park, find a bench on a hiking trail, or get together with other authors once a week and write. We DO NOT suggest that you begin to separate yourself from your family and friends, but rather spend an hour or two a week to write in a non-"combative" environment. Yes, it may take you longer to write your story, but you will be glad you did.

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- Taking writing classes is a plus, especially if you are not familiar with the basics of creative writing. And we want to wish a HUGE CONGRATS to you for attending a Journey to Publication workshop! You've taken a very important step in your writing career by doing so.
    - Bettering yourself and continually being open to learning makes you a prime candidate for success.
      - A big mistake is thinking you know it all when it comes to writing; You are setting yourself up for a mighty big fall. There is always something new to learn, a topic to refresh yourself on, or time to re-read and make your story better before you submit it.
      - Success is not always about becoming a New York Times Best Selling Author, or making a \$1,000,000 right out of the gate. These are great dreams - they have happened to a few authors. But most of us will be setting other goals to work toward, and it is going to take a lot of time and effort to achieve our goals. If you are only writing to achieve the biggest goals in the literary world (New York Times Best Selling / \$1,000,000 advances) you are 99% certainly positioning yourself for much disappointment along the way, so you'd best be ready to handle rejection and bad reviews in epic proportions. And in reality you need to accept the fact that the odds are against you in reaching the New York Times Best Selling, \$1,000,000 dream – it is not impossible, and we do not want to

discourage you from trying, but we want you to know you will have your work cut out for you.

- Success can come in the form of seeing yourself as an accomplished and successful author because you finished your manuscript and it was published. You may only sell a few hundred copies, or even less of your book. The key is to be satisfied with the completion of your work and having it published.
  - True Success Goals: start with small obtainable goals, and build on those, and never stop believing in you and your story.
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- For an extra fun activity, have enthusiasts go out online to sites where book reviews can be found and read the diverse array of good and bad. Which reviews and number of stars do they find most helpful when choosing a book?

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**Discussion:**

- What are some of your fears as a writer when it comes to submitting your book to a publisher?
- How do you think you will react to your first negative review?
- Are you willing to become an author with “thick skin” when it comes to rejection and bad reviews?

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**Much will be discussed in this session. We suggest you take notes extensive notes drawn from what your overseer presents.**

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**Below are actual reviews author Janet Beasley has received. Notice the extreme differences in how her book has been perceived.**

**Are reviews are available to the public. To read more reviews and review snippets please visit [HiddenEarthSeries.com](http://HiddenEarthSeries.com)**

**Reviews have been directly copied and pasted, any errors of spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar have been taken straight from the reviews as they appear “to the world.”**

- Which reviews do you find most helpful?
- Which ones do you find most helpful as a reader in choosing a book to read or recommend?
- Which ones sound like true reviews?
- Which ones sound like opinions rather than true reviews?
- Which reviews do you find most helpful in choosing a book for you or a friend?
- Do any of the reviews leave you doubting yourself as a writer?

**Review #1: Maycly the Trilogy = all three parts in one book**

**1 STAR**

This book was not for me I just could not get into it but i read the whole thing. This book seemed to me like it would have been i good story if the characters acted more adult Iona is very child like to me. almost as if the idea of Iona started out as a middle school student who was very sick and dependent on her family and boyfriend but somewhere along the way she was made older. This book was not one i would Recommend

**Review #2: Maycly the Trilogy = all three parts in one book**

**3 STARS**

I would to thank R2R and the author for a copy to review. I know it's only a 3 star review, but it's actually a good story. It's like reading a fairy tale mixed with a bible of religion. Everything comes down to good versus evil. There are all different kind of creatures and they all have names and a fate. There are multiple volumes, which is basically like a series.

I normally prefer the more fantasy side, terrible I know, but the extremes lol I like fights and violence and crazy plots, which makes this book a little slow for me. I also didn't have much connection to the characters.

However, I do recommend this for people who want a grand adventure to read their kids-ya know, story time. Or for people who enjoy reading the more conservative types of

fantasies. The writing style is well done, and that makes it an easy read. So 3 Paws from me.

**Review #3: Maycly the Trilogy = all three parts in one book**

**4 STARS**

I love fantasy novels and was feeling broke as usual so I was hesitating about buying the paperback version of this one. I was delighted when the author broke her long tale into smaller ebooks and began reading right away.

The tale of a sickly woman who loses her family and her home began to depress me and feel much too much like what I was seeing in the world around me and I opened another book.

Finally my curiosity got the better of me and I returned to Maycly. I'm glad I did, parts are long and parallel the biblical creation a bit much but the majority is well written and fascinating to read. I still like the main character and her dog better than the fantasy world but she is so well drawn and interesting that it is no wonder she appeals.

This seems more than a children's book and I have not read the next sections. Yet. I am not sure how the story will end but I am sure the writer has poured her heart into her creation.

**Review #4: Maycly the Trilogy = all three parts in one book**

**5 STARS**

I was hooked on this epic YA trilogy after reading the first book in the series, "Hidden Earth, Part 1: Maycly." It was in e-book format and I must say I love the cover. I fell for the lovely, impish lady with the butterfly eye tattoo and had to know more about her. Thanks to artist Dar Bagby for the eye-catching cover and the inspired illustrations throughout the book.

The author also put books two and three in e-format, but before I got around to purchasing them, she had come out with the print version, containing all three books and some delightful treats throughout, including: maps, more illustrations, recipes, family trees and descriptions important to understanding all about these awesome characters Janet Beasley has created. Needless to say, I had to have the complete book...all 700+ pages. When I wrote to the author about an autographed copy of the full-trilogy book--which I have placed in the special "collectibles" area of my growing library--I can't believe the endearing note she wrote for me. All I can say is: Wow! Thanks, Janet Beasley.

Book One begins with the main character, Iona, who has been happily married to Cole for the last five years. When Iona develops chronic health issues, she depends on her husband and her parents, Ann and Leonard, for help. Suddenly they disappear and the poor woman is forced to take care of herself. She soon uses up all her resources and is



about to become homeless. She loses faith in their God, Sorcerer of Unequivocal Leadership (SUL). He's a grand wizard and creator of Earth and Maycly, but when he allows these things to happen to her, she turns from him, resolving to find her family by herself.

A mini-miracle happens when she is about to be evicted: a puppy called Wiskee is left on her doorstep. She doesn't recognize it as a miracle, but she and Wiskee take to each other and she decides to keep him. Together they brave the elements where they are forced to sleep wherever they can...until a stranger offers them an apartment.

At this time, the author flashes back a hundred years and the readers learn all about Maycly, its history and Iona's destiny.

There is a fierce battle going on between good and evil, with Iona right in the middle of the action. She had always longed for an adventure, but not of these epic proportions. All she wants to do is recapture her health, find her family and go back to their more simple life.

But that doesn't happen quickly. As the author so cleverly designs, Iona's struggles last through all three books of this "Hidden Earth" trilogy. Many questions are answered in each book, but the most important questions are: Where is her family? When will she find them? When does she discover her destiny? Will she be strong enough to fight the coming battles to claim her destiny?

But the most important question is: Which will win in the end--Good or Evil?

Author Janet Beasley answers all the questions raised in this trilogy with her masterful use of words and fantastic insight into her characters. There are numerous characters, which would make it hard to follow, but Beasley's family trees and helpful, full-color illustrations by artist Dar Bagby are touches of genius that help make the read smooth and easy.

I especially enjoyed getting to know these unique characters, fascinating creatures and the remarkable landscape of Maycly...a world as unique as our own Earth. In my opinion, when a writer brings her characters to such vivid life that we care what happens to them...well, that's when she wins her readers over. I adored Iona so much that I wanted to hug her and root her on; I would love to rub Wiskee behind the ears and cuddle up with him. In fact, I felt like I was inside this landscape with them... It was a superb reading pleasure to watch Iona develop through the years...under the brilliant pen of Janet Beasley. What a remarkable character! What an amazing writer!

Kudos to Beasley for pulling off this lengthy saga in grand style, for giving us so many surprise twists and turns, for giving us life lessons on morality without being preachy, and for a very satisfactory ending. All of that without any profanity, explicit sex or vulgarity of any kind, making this a book suitable for kids of all ages.

If this magical book were a movie--which it should be--I picture it on a colossal scale like "Lord of the Rings." If it were a painting, it would be like Paul Cezanne's "The Card Players" which sold for \$259 million dollars, the most expensive painting ever sold to date.

Hollywood, are you listening?

**Review #4: Maycly the Trilogy = all three parts in one book**

**A letter received from a 6<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher**

One of the kids I have reading your book is really, really troubled, bi polar messed up family and serious behavior problems. I've had him reading Maycly for about 3 weeks. He LOVES it, and sees the whole good and evil thing. He's really responding to it and I haven't had a problem with him in class since! He used to just sit and draw, but now he's actually reading and doing assignments for me! I couldn't be more thrilled with his progress. I showed him the Chukkons illustration book and he loves to refer back to that as well! I'm hoping we've managed to make a serious turn in this kid's life. Yet another reason to love Maycly!

**Review #5: Maycly the Trilogy Book 1 = Two Altered Worlds**

**5 STARS from Reader's Favorite reviewer Mamta Madhavan**

Hidden Earth Series Volume 1: Maycly the Trilogy Part by Janet Beasley is about Iona who finds herself thrown into circumstances much against her will. While you are getting acquainted with her, the story takes a turn back in time. The reader is taken to Maycly where everyone is waiting hopefully for the queen's arrival. Part I of the story actually leads you to Part 2 of the book.

I found the book scintillating. Adventure, magic, whimsy, dreams, fantasy, imagination -- it's all there. Children of the current generation are totally into adventure and fantasy series with the overwhelming popularity of Harry Potter and the like. These are stories that can actually awaken the creativity inside you and dare you to dream and fantasize.

The book is the right combination of fantasy and adventure. Iona is well depicted: her innocence, her adventures, her faith, and tragedies. The language is elegant and excellent. Illustrations always give a new meaning to the characters and these illustrations also give you an idea of how each character looks as well as lending color to the story.

The open ending of the book suggests that there will be another part to it. The battle between good and evil is the highlight of the story. Will Iona's journey be even more adventurous in the next part?

**Review #6: Maycly the Trilogy Book 2 = The Battle of Trust and Treachery**

**5 STARS from Reader's Favorite reviewer Mamta Madhavan**

Hidden Earth Series Volume 1 Maycly the Trilogy - Part 2 ~ The Battle of Trust and Treachery, by Janet Beasley, takes off from where the first part ends. The reader is again taken on an adventure trip where the characters go through heartaches, fantasy, whimsy, and everything that appeals to the reader.

I found the second part equally compelling as the first part. The author's imagination is still on a high in this part. There are many amazing creatures, use of elaborate language, and some nice illustrations which leave an impression about the characters in the story. The plot and the story are as good as the first part of the story.

All the creatures in the book are also very whimsical. Both the parts of the story will make a good movie too. What I like about this kind of adventure and fantasy fiction is that it gives room for the reader to think without any barriers. The epic battle is fought in a new way in this story.

Hidden Earth Series Volume 1 Maycly the Trilogy - Part 2 ~ The Battle of Trust and Treachery also speaks about the author's expertise. She is able to write a story with an adventure plot in three parts and still manages to leave the reader asking for more. The book caters to readers of all age groups because it encourages you to dream and let your imagination run wild.

### **Review #7: Maycly the Trilogy Book 3 = The Queen**

#### **5 STARS from Reader's Favorite reviewer Mamta Madhavan**

Hidden Earth Series Volume 1 Maycly the Trilogy - Part 3 ~ The Queen by Janet Beasley is the last part of this adventure series. The book begins with Iona's childhood, then proceeds to the actual story. We see the introduction of a new creature in this book, and now the connection between Iona and Maycly is understood properly.

I liked this as much as the previous books. Unlike the other two, this one is less violent and ends on a positive note. The story is also full of fantasy, adventure, whimsy, and bits of terror and violence. The book has many more illustrations compared to the other two parts. The illustrations work in tandem with the characters and lend them more credibility. The illustrator has ably captured the mood of the story and the illustrations complement the book beautifully. The author evokes the creativity inside a child by daring him to dream differently.

Adventure stories have catapulted authors to fame after the success of the Harry Potter series. The questions that have been nagging readers have been dealt with in this book, putting to rest all the doubts. The book concludes by making the readers wish that there was more to come. Personally, I think the author can come up with more parts to this series.